

Agricultural Marketing Service  
Office of the Deputy Administrator for Marketing Programs  
Fruit and Vegetable Division  
Fresh Products Branch  
Agricultural Commodity Grader (Fresh Fruit and Vegetable)  
GS-1980-10 (Officer-In-Charge)

SJ FV49

## I. INTRODUCTION

This position is located in a Field Office of the Fruit and Vegetable Division, Fresh Products Branch, Agricultural Marketing Service. The incumbent serves as the sole grader of a terminal market office which provides grading and inspection services for a variety of products. The incumbent grades and inspects an extensive range of fruits, vegetables, and related products at various terminal market sites such as warehouses, railroad sidings, repacking plants, and similar facilities. The grader inspects and grades the full range of fresh fruit and vegetable products (typically 30-40), plans own schedule, and maintains relationships with area receivers, brokers, repackers, and other users of the service. Assignments may also involve details and/or reassignment to a different geographical area decided by management.

## II. MAJOR DUTIES

Reviews requests for service, evaluates priority of service requests according to product type and service location, and schedules own work to provide prompt and efficient service.

Examines and evaluates fresh fruits and vegetables to determine their official U.S. grade in terms of quality and condition. Inspects products to determine quality, condition, and/or compliance with stated contract specifications. This includes:

- Selecting representative samples from product lots in accordance with prescribed sampling procedures and plans.
- Examining and evaluating fresh fruits and vegetables in accordance with U.S. grades, State grades, or contract specifications.
- Determining and describing those factors which affect product marketability such as product size, shape, external and internal appearance, maturity, firmness, and presence of bruising, breakdown, or decay, or other similar condition factors.
- Consideration of quantity, packaging, or similar conditions which are common in contract specifications.

Prepares inspection reports based on results of examination of product. This is done through application of official grade standards or contract specifications to determine product's grade and/or condition. Issues official inspection reports and explains determinations to appropriate industry employees. Submits inspection reports to Branch service center locations, and interacts with service center personnel to facilitate processing of reports.

Prepares and submits to Branch management monthly activity reports on trade happenings in area.

Contacts receivers, brokers, repackers, and other users of the service regarding delinquent payments for service. Explains proposals to amend or revise U.S. grade standards to receivers, wholesalers, and others that use these standards to market fresh fruits and vegetables.

The incumbent may supervise one or two employees on technical aspects of grading and inspection.

Adheres to Equal Employment and Civil Rights policies, goals, and objectives in performing the duties of this position. Assures that written and oral communications are bias-free and that differences of other employees and clients are respected and valued.

### III. FACTORS

#### Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position Level 1-6, 950 points

Knowledge of the official standards and regulations, of Branch inspection procedures, of pertinent product characteristics, and of product defects for an extensive variety of products.

Knowledge of transportation, storage, and handling practices, as they may be causes of product defects, for an extensive variety of products.

Skill in inspecting and grading an extensive range of distinct products and in establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships with industry.

#### Factor 2. Supervisory Controls Level 2-4, 450 points

The incumbent independently plans, coordinates, and executes day to day work which involves making decisions on a full range of technical situations. The incumbent resolves most conflicts that arise, although the grader consults with the Regional Director on highly controversial decisions. Completed work is reviewed only from an overall standpoint in terms of feasibility, compatibility, and conformity to established policies and procedures. Primary responsibility for dealing with the trade in the geographical area serviced by the inspection office rests with the incumbent.

Factor 3. Guidelines Level 3-3, 275 points

The primary guidelines are the official grade standard, agency instruction manuals, and supplemental technical and administrative directives. Also available are physical models and visual aids on a great number of products.

The employee selects and applies appropriate guides independently, often making decisions under time pressures caused by the movement of perishable items in the marketing channels. The grader applies the full range of guidelines available for use.

Factor 4. Complexity Level 4-3, 150 points

The work involves the direct inspection and grading of an extensive range of products. Consideration must be given to the varied types of defects which can occur, the identification of the same, and the extent to which the defect reduces the product quality. Compliance or noncompliance with many distinctly separate contract specifications is often determined.

Factor 5. Scope and Effect Level 5-3, 150 points

Work involves making final grade and condition determinations and directly issuing written official USDA certifications. Such determinations affect the products' price and/or acceptability in relation to contract specifications. Both factors affect the financial interests of buyers and sellers.

Factor 6. Personal Contacts Level 6-2, 25 points

Contacts include the OIC's supervisory personnel, Branch service center personnel, and employees and managers of firms involved in fresh fruit and vegetable marketing, such as receivers, brokers, repackers, and shippers.

Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts Level 7-3, 120 points

The purpose is to promote and maintain cooperation and suitable working relations with persons in the industry by explaining the agency program and resolving conflicts. This includes explaining grade or condition determinations and following up on delinquent payments for service.

Factor 8. Physical Demands Level 8-3, 50 points

Commodity grading work requires periods of physical exertion to lift and move boxes and cartons of product often weighing more than 50 pounds; prolonged periods of standing, walking, stooping, bending, and climbing; physical coordination and finger dexterity in both hands to perform digital examinations of commodities and to safely enter and leave rail cars and trailers; ability to detect abnormalities in the commodity through normal or corrected vision in at least one eye for distance, depth perception, and color; the ability to assure safety in a highly mechanized and/or noisy environment through adequate or correctable hearing; and the ability to decide product quality or condition through smell and/or taste.

Factor 9. Work Environment Level 9-2, 20 points

The work environment includes exposure to adverse outdoor weather, working in refrigerated areas, and exposure to fumes and odors from machinery and coolants.

TOTAL POINTS = 2190, GS-10